

SATURDAY REVIEW

FRONT RUNNERS



Is Nice a Vice?

What is your pugnacity quotient? If you're the easygoing, sunny-natured type, better not apply for a job as guard at the Reno, Nevada, city jail—you might be labeled "too nice" to rate being hired.

This happened recently to Diana Vasquez, who came out number one on written exams for the jail job, but was deep-sixed by the jail's psychological tester because, he said, she was "too nice" to be a jailer. But Vasquez is not all *that* nice: She fought back vigorously, with help from the American Civil Liberties Union. "Why," Vasquez asked,

"should a jail be an ugly environment run by people who are not nice? Is this necessary to effectively operate a correctional facility?"

When a Civil Service Commission psychologist was called in to review the Vasquez case, he concluded that the jail's job-testing procedures needed overhauling. The Reno police department then backed down and reinstated Vasquez as number one on their waiting list. But now, after her dash with the police, Vasquez is not sure whether she will accept the appointment if it comes through. If she does turn it down, the jail psychologists can always claim that her change of mind only shows she is erratic and was unfit to begin with.

Supergun

Do the Israelis have an exotic new superweapon? And did they use this weapon to knock out Uganda's early-warning system during the now famous raid at Entebbe Airport? Wild as it sounds, this rumor is being talked up by various sources, most notably *Foreign Report*, a publication put out by London's Economist Newspaper, Ltd.

According to the *Report*, the new Israeli weapon is very real and very effective: It foils enemy radar, jams electronic circuitry, and even bollixes up other electronic equipment and other mechanical devices. During a demonstration at a Canadian bank in

1969, says the *Report*, the weapon was beamed at several bags stuffed with money, and burly policemen were unable to lift the bags.

A Canadian named Sidney Hurwitz is identified as the device's inventor; he claims, the journal says, that his ray weapon can in theory disable tanks and throw up impenetrable force fields in midair.

The *Report* says, finally, that because of the new weapon all electronic warning systems at Entebbe Airport went dead during the Israeli raid and that Idi Amin later executed the airport's control tower personnel after they claimed their instruments had malfunctioned "as though by magic."

Miracle in San Francisco

Young piano virtuoso goes into tailspin, disappears for five days, then is found living in poverty with his performing skills miraculously intact.

No, that's not a soap opera but the true life story of Ervin Nyiregyhazi. Born in Hungary, Nyiregyhazi was acclaimed as a genius when he made his U.S. debut in 1918 at the age of fifteen. Unfortunately for him, his parents' eager to shield their prodigy from everyday distractions—had been him shamelessly. At the age of eighteen he could not tie his shoelaces or cut his meat at the dinner table. Not surprisingly, in the 1920s he began to shrink from performing publicly. His career sputtered to a halt, and the young pianist dropped out of sight.

Then three years ago some people found Nyiregyhazi in San Francisco, living in down-at-the-heels surroundings. It developed throughout his five "lost decades" that he had in fact kept right on playing, studying, and composing. According to the Ford Foundation news release, Nyiregyhazi "has written more than 700 works, many of them for orchestra."

Now seventy-four, Nyiregyhazi does not feel up to playing piano and he has not made a recording since 1921. But Gregor Benko, president of International Piano Archives, has persuaded him for taping selections from his considerable repertoire—including much-celebrated interpretations of Liszt. The taping project is being underwritten by the Ford Foundation.

Bafflegab

This directive was recently issued statewide by the Colorado Bureau of Investigation: "Fortunately, the message we asked you to disregard was not sent. Thus, we ask you to disregard the message we sent you."